

NEWS

Marines celebrate Corps’ 228th birthday ... one mile at a time

CPL. JENNIFER BROFER
STAFF WRITER

Depot Marines celebrated the Marine Corps’ 228th Birthday, not by cutting a cake or reading Gen. John A. Lejeune’s birthday message, but by running 228 miles collectively – one mile for each Marine Corps year.

Drill instructors from Golf Co., 2nd RTBn., paid homage to the Marine Corps by running 228 miles, beginning Sunday afternoon and ending Monday morning, split up between 23 runners over 19 consecutive hours. Each Marine ran at least nine miles, some as many as 21 miles, to complete the event.

The run helped the Marines celebrate the birthday in a slightly different way than the traditional birthday ceremony – in physical training gear vice Dress Blues.

“It seemed like a unique way to celebrate the birthday,” said Sgt. Brian Villiard, Golf Co. drill instructor. “It’s a little different that the cake-cutting ceremony and the events that follow after that.”

“I have never done it before, so I thought it would be a good way to build unit camaraderie,” added Staff Sgt. Douglas Mrusek, series gunnery sergeant. “I’d seen other units do it, and I had always wanted to do it. It’s a nice way to celebrate the birthday and the hard work former Marines have done ... this was a good way to pay them back.”

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Cpl. Jennifer Brofer

Corporal Shenay Hawkins-Allen, legal specialist for the Depot Law Center, runs alongside Lance Cpls. Kevin A. Duckworth and Otto Davila-Gonzalez as they finish the final mile of their three-mile motivation run in celebration of the Marine Corps’ 228 Birthday.

ines ran 228 miles over the course of 14 hours Nov. 6-7, to honor the Corps, the Marines who fought and died in the wars of yesteryear and the Marines who continue to fight and die for their country today.

Marines ran the three-mile course in groups of three continuously throughout the night, starting and ending at the Iron Mike statue, and passed off a symbolic baton until the 225-mile mark had been reached. Afterward, the

entire battalion formed up to run the final three miles.

Even with runners waking up at “zero-dark-thirty” to participate, no one complained about running the three miles ... they simply remembered why they chose to run in the first place.

“We have to think about the Marines before us who died, and the Marines dying for us now,” said Sgt. Bo Boston, legal specialist for the Depot Law Center. “Whenever I get tired, I think we only have to run three miles while other Marines are over there dying.”

It was not hard to find participants for the event, said Staff Sgt. Brenda Clark, Service Co. gunnery sergeant. Within an hour-and-a-half, the sign-up sheet for the time slots had filled up completely with the names of 75 Marines who wanted to participate in the run, along with a waiting list of participants willing to run in another runner’s absence.

With segregation among the Marine Corps balls, split up between sergeants and below, staff NCOs and officers, the run gave the Marines an opportunity to commemorate the birthday together, regardless of rank, said Clark.

“This is the only way we could celebrate the birthday together as a battalion since we all have our separate ball celebrations,” said Clark. “It was about camaraderie and motivation ... in memory of the Marines at Iwo Jima and Guadalcanal.”

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six months ago, he was a recruiter.

“It feels great to win,” said Fenton. “After so much time off from shooting like this, I wasn’t sure how I’d do.”

Fenton also achieved top honors in the team matches. His team, WFTBn. Gold, finished first in the Rifle Team Match and the Pistol Team Match. Team members included Sgt. Daniel W. Mankiewicz, Sgt. Josh A. Wilson and Sgt. Brian S. Wortman. The team captain/coach was Sgt. Charels Reynolds IV.

Fenton said he was not always so successful on the range. It took some time for him to develop into the shooter he is today. It was not until he started competing that he began picking up valuable tricks of the trade.

“There’s so much knowledge to be gained in competitive shooting,” he said. “You pick up on things that work for you. The more you shoot, the better you become.”

Fenton said that out of all the things he has learned throughout his time competing, one thing remains the most valuable to his success.

“Consistency is key,” he said. “You have to do everything exactly the same every time. That way, you know how it’s going to look when it hits black.”

Fenton said he even picked up tips before he began the Depot competition. Sgt. James Ruiz, match instructor for the competition, who was recently selected for the Marine Corps Permanent Rifle/Pistol Team, gave him some pointers on a better way to grip the pistol, Fenton said.

Going into the competition, Fenton said his only goal was to make the Parris Island Rifle and Pistol Team. Compiling a team to represent the Depot from those

“There’s so much knowledge to be gained in competitive shooting. The more you shoot, the better you become.”

– Staff Sgt. Jerry R. Fenton, Chosin Range

who participated is the secondary purpose of the competition. Those who make the team are chosen based on attitude, consistency and score. They are also individually interviewed.

Team members go on to compete in division matches at Camp Lejeune, N.C., later in the year. Teams, who score high enough, go on to compete in the Marine Corps Matches. Individuals, who qualify, could have a chance to compete on the Marine Corps Summer Team and possibly the Marine Corps Permanent Team.

Other individual winners from the Rifle/Pistol Competition include: Mankiewicz, second in rifle with a 517; Capt. Joseph D. Arico, third in rifle with a 512; Reynolds IV, second in pistol with a 450 and second overall with a total of 952; and Wilson, third in pistol with a 442 and third overall with a total of 950.

Second place in the Rifle Team Match was the WFTBn. Silver team, with Sgt. Curtis W. Ross, Sgt. Moses E. Vilca, Cpl. Josh L. Willoughby and Lance Cpl. Eli J. Oleksiak. Team coach and captain was Sgt. Stanley A. Carver. Second place in the Pistol Team Match was Vilca, Wortman, Cpl. Paul J. Warner and Cpl. John P. Codello, and Cpl. Anthony Gobert was the coach and captain.



Pfc. Justin J. Shemanski

A group of Marines from the Provost Marshal’s Office execute a front jab as part of their baton-training exercises. The course is held quarterly to ensure the Marines remain proficient with the baton techniques.

PFC. JUSTIN J. SHEMANSKI
STAFF WRITER

With a forward strike and a couple of jabs, baton training for military police officers aboard MCRD Parris Island began Nov. 4.

Seventeen Marines participated in the one-day course that is held quarterly to review proper techniques and to teach new military policemen how to properly utilize the Monadnock Expandable Baton.

“The whole course is basically a refresher to all MPs who carry black gear,” said Staff Sgt. Eric Bryant, the Provost Marshal’s Office training chief.

He said all officers carry pepper spray and an expandable baton along with their weapon and they must use them appropriately depending on the level of hostility.

“The baton is used as a back-up to the spray,” Bryant said. “When the spray doesn’t

work is when it’s important to know how to use a baton. When you use a baton, which is a non-lethal weapon, it is important to know where to hit,” said Bryant. “We want to teach them how to strike with a baton correctly without even having to think about it.”

According to Bryant, an MP cannot hit anywhere near the head, which could cause death, or strike any of the joint areas of the arms and legs, the groin, or the chest, which could all leave someone seriously injured. He said the main goal of this type of training is to gain control of the subject and to not use deadly force if possible.

At the beginning of the classes, several jabs, strikes and other movements are taught using the baton. They are also taught how to keep balance and move around their opponents without opening themselves up to a hit.

During the end of the course, an MP puts on the “Red Man

Suit” and the Marines take turns defending themselves against their heavily-padded attacker.

“This is where we see what they have learned,” said Bryant. “During the static exercises where they practice by themselves, you can’t really see how they would react in a real situation. With the suit, the Marines are really attacked and

must use the baton techniques learned to defend themselves.”

“This is where you see if the Marine is able to improvise in a fight and use the right techniques at the right times,” added Bryant.

Bryant said the incident rate on Parris Island where a baton would be used is relatively low, but the training is still required, just in case.